

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of irradiating a layer including:

directing and focussing a radiation beam to a spot on said layer by means of at least one optical element;

causing relative movement of the layer relative to said at least one optical element so that, successively, different portions of the layer are irradiated and an interspace between a surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer is maintained; and

maintaining ~~at least a portion of~~ said interspace through which said radiation irradiates said spot on said layer filled with a liquid, the liquid being supplied via a supply conduit;

characterized in that at least a portion of said interspace is bounded by a recess which is filled by at least a portion of said liquid, ~~fills up a recess through which said radiation irradiates beam passing through said liquid in said recess when irradiating said spot, wherein said recess is bounded by a passage in a wall between said layer and a surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer and by said at least one optical element nearest to said layer, said radiation beam passing through said passage.~~

2. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The method according to~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the recess has a rim portion positioned between said surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer and said layer, closest to said layer and extending around said radiation beam irradiating said spot.

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The method according to~~ as claimed in claim ~~31~~, wherein a liquid outflow from said recess via said passage is maintained.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The method according to~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein a smallest thickness of said interspace is maintained of 3-1500 μm .

6. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The method according to~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein said recess includes a concave portion of said surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The method according to~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the liquid flows out from at least one outflow opening in said recess in the form of at least one canal open towards said layer, said canal distributing supplied liquid longitudinally along said canal and dispensing distributed liquid towards said layer.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~A method according to claim 1~~ A method of irradiating a layer including:

directing and focussing a radiation beam to a spot on said layer by means of at least one optical element;

causing relative movement of the layer relative to said at least one optical element so that, successively, different portions of the layer are irradiated and an interspace between a surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer is maintained; and

maintaining at least a portion of said interspace through which said radiation irradiates said spot on said layer filled with a liquid, the liquid being supplied via a supply conduit;

characterized in that at least a portion of said liquid fills up a recess through which said radiation irradiates said spot,

wherein said interspace between said layer and said surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said layer has a thickness H, the layer and the at least one optical element are moved relative to each other at a velocity V, the liquid is supplied via an outflow opening having a width W measured in a plane parallel to said layer and at a flow rate equal to $0.5 \cdot H \cdot (W + \bullet H) \cdot V$, where \bullet is a constant between 1 and 10 and \bullet is a constant between 1 and 3.

9. (Currently Amended) A device for directing radiation to a layer including:

at least one optical element for focussing radiation originating from said radiation source to a spot on said layer;

a displacement structure for causing relative movement of the layer relative to said at least one optical element so that, successively, different portions of the layer are irradiated and an interspace between said layer and a surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said spot is maintained; and

an outflow opening for supplying liquid to ~~fill at least a portion of said interspace through which~~, in operation, said radiation irradiates said spot on said layer, through said liquid,

characterized by in that said device further comprises a recess in a surface facing said spot, having an internal surface of said recess bounding at least said portion of said interspace through which said radiation irradiates said spot, said outflow opening being formed in said recess, wherein said recess is bounded by a passage in a wall between said spot and a surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said spot and by said surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said spot, said passage forming said outflow opening.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~A- The device according to as claimed in~~ claim 9, wherein said recess has a rim portion closest to said layer extending around said portion of said interspace through which, in operation, said radiation irradiates said spot.

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The device according to as claimed in claim 119, wherein said device further including comprises a liquid supply structure communicating with said passage-recess for maintaining a liquid outflow via said passage.~~

13. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The device according to as claimed in claim 9, wherein said device is arranged for maintaining a smallest thickness of said interspace of 3-3-1500 μm.~~

14. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The device according to as claimed in claim 9, wherein said recess includes a concave portion of said surface of said at least one optical element nearest to said spot.~~

15. (Currently Amended) ~~A-The device according to as claimed in claim 9, wherein the at least one outflow opening is formed by at least one canal open towards said layer, for distributing supplied liquid longitudinally along said canal and dispensing distributed liquid towards said layer.~~